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President: Mr. Kutesa ..... (Uganda)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Antoine (Grenada), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia, late Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques

The Acting President: Before we proceed to the items on our agenda, it is my sad duty to pay tribute to the memory of the late Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia, who passed away on Friday, 23 January 2015. On behalf of the General Assembly, I would like to request the representative of Saudi Arabia to convey our condolences to the Government and the people of Saudi Arabia and to the bereaved family of King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud.

I now invite the representatives to stand and observe a moment of silence in tribute to the memory of King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The Acting President: I shall now deliver a statement on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session, on the passing away of the King of Saudi Arabia, His Majesty King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, late Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques.

"It is with profound respect and regret that I pay tribute to King Abdullah, who passed away earlier this month. The King leaves behind an important legacy through his major contributions to the development of the Kingdom and the Arab region and, indeed, the entire world. King Abdullah's leadership and vision at home led to key advancements in many important areas. His efforts helped to ensure that his nation enjoyed strong international engagement and partnerships. Under his leadership, Saudi Arabia also became an important contributor to humanitarian issues, helping to improve the lives of people around the world. The King's efforts to promote dialogue, harmony and peace will long be remembered. In particular, he took bold steps to advance the Arab Peace Initiative in the search for lasting peace in the region.

"In conclusion, I would like to extend my sincere condolences to the bereaved family, the Government and the people of Saudi Arabia. May God grant King Abdullah's soul peace."

I now give the floor to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: I wish to thank the General Assembly for organizing this ceremony. I am honoured to join all those present in paying tribute to the life and legacy of the late Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud.

King Abdullah was a wise and compassionate leader who guided Saudi Arabia's development,

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worked to resolve peace and security challenges and address counter-terrorism, and devoted his energies to seeking reconciliation and understanding among people of different cultures through inter-faith dialogue initiatives. I am especially grateful for his stalwart support for the United Nations and the least fortunate among us. He was a champion against global hunger. In 2008, during the crisis over high food prices, he arranged for the World Food Programme (WFP) to receive $500 million — the largest single donation that the WFP has ever received. More recently, King Abdullah generously supported humanitarian assistance efforts in Syria and Iraq, where millions of people are in dire need. He also undertook initiatives to promote dialogue among the world's faiths. In 2008, he became the first King of Saudi Arabia to address the United Nations at an important two-day bridge-building gathering of world leaders.

I met him on several occasions, most recently last July in Jeddah. At that time, we focused primarily on resolving the Middle East conflict and reviving the Arab Peace Initiative, for which he was the driving force. But our conversation also ranged more widely. He told me of his belief in the fraternity and brotherhood among human beings. He stressed that tensions between cultures and faiths are not a function of religion but of politicians who exploit division. At the end of the meeting, I thanked him for his leadership. I told him I was energized by his compassion. He simply replied that he did not seek recognition or gratitude. Instead, he said, "What I do I feel is incumbent on any human being". This message of humility and grace were his last words to me, and the ones by which I will remember him most.

King Abdullah lived through much turmoil and change. His efforts made an impact throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds and the international community. I offer my condolences to the bereaved royal family and to the people of Saudi Arabia. I look forward to personally conveying my sympathy and support when I visit Saudi Arabia, which I hope to do very soon.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Laassel (Morocco): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of African States on this very sad occasion for all of us on the passing away, on 23 January 2015, of King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud. The African Group would like to commend the decision to convene this special meeting of the General Assembly dedicated to paying tribute to the late King Abdullah. It is a very significant gesture to recognize the engagement of this leader of wisdom in international peace and security.

The African Group would like to convey its condolences to the Government and the people of Saudi Arabia for their great loss, which is also a loss for the international community as a whole, including our continent, Africa.

Yes, it is a loss for us all if we take into account the wise guidance and contributions of the late King to international peace and security as well as to international cooperation. Indeed, under his reign, Africa benefited from many projects aimed at socioeconomic development and cooperation in many fields. Very recently, King Abdullah pledged $35 million to fight Ebola on the African continent — Ebola had been declared by the Security Council as a threat to peace and security.

In his capacity as the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, the late King spared no effort to aid pilgrims from all over the world, including those from our continent, to accomplish their rituals in perfect and respectful conditions.

The late King also shared the idea of holding a dialogue among civilizations to prevent any extreme views that might cause tensions among civilizations. Hence, his contributions to bridging the gap between cultures and narrowing tensions in what are referred to as clashes of civilizations were realized by the establishment in Vienna in 2011 of the International Centre of King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue.

Nowadays, we witness the spillover of violent extremism and terrorism. Since his enthronement, he managed first to fight the local version of Al-Qaida, which perpetrated acts of terrorism in Saudi Arabia, and by 2006 he had managed to rid the country of the scourge of terrorism. He also embarked on a fight against it at the international level. In 2014, he spearheaded Saudi Arabia's contribution of $100 million to establish the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre. The African States are in dire need of being able to benefit from the Centre's programmes on capacity-building to fight terrorism and terrorist groups such as o Haram.

As to the question of Palestine, to which the African States are eager to find a solution, the late

King spared no effort to seek a breakthrough to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of two States, taking into account the Arab Peace Initiative, adopted in Beirut at the 2007 Arab League Summit.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Viet Nam, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States.

Mrs. Nguyen (Viet Nam): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States at this solemn gathering of the General Assembly to pay tribute to the memory of the late Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, His Majesty King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

I would like to begin by expressing our sincere thanks to the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting of the General Assembly. On behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group, I would like to extend our deepest condolences to the bereaved family of King Abdullah and to the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a fellow member of the Asia-Pacific Group.

The passing away of King Abdullah is a great loss to the royal family, the Government and the people of Saudi Arabia. The world has lost an outstanding leader. Under his leadership, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia registered remarkable advantages and brought greater prosperity to its people. The international community will remember King Abdullah's attention and contribution to the furthering of diplomatic initiatives for the settlement of regional and international issues, especially in the Middle East. As the Secretary-General has stated, King Abdullah served as a driving force behind the Arab Peace Initiative and has left a tangible legacy that can point the way towards peace in the Middle East.

The United Nations community will also remember King Abdullah for Saudi Arabia's contribution, under his leadership, to the work of the United Nations as well as its main organs, specialized agencies and bodies, especially in the fields of development, cooperation and humanitarian assistance. That important contribution has significantly promoted the role of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security and promoting development.

Given his significant legacy and our strong memories of his leadership, we are convinced that the royal family, the Government and the people of Saudi Arabia will make greater achievements in national development. It is also our conviction that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the leadership of King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, will continue to contribute to our collective efforts for peace, security and development the world over.

At this solemn moment, I would like to once again reiterate our commitment to cooperation with the Government and the people of Saudi Arabia in our joint endeavours for a better world.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Ms. Bogyay (Hungary): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

The Eastern European Group would like to express its deepest condolences to the Government and the people of Saudi Arabia on the sad occasion of the passing away, on 23 January, of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, His Majesty King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

King Abdullah led a long and distinguished life to the benefit of his country, advancing its modernization and economic development. His Majesty was an important figure in international and regional affairs, including through his support for interreligious and intercultural dialogue. He played a crucial role in the region in fighting extremism and supporting peace and stability, including through the Arab Peace Initiative. On this sad occasion, the Eastern European Group offers its sincere sympathies to the royal family and to the Government and the people of Saudi Arabia.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Haiti, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Régis (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): It is a great honour for me to speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States in expressing our heartfelt sadness at the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's plunge into mourning with its loss of King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud. In this time of sorrow, the Latin American and Caribbean Group joins the community of the States Members of the United Nations in offering its sincere condolences to the noble Saudi people and their Government.

Heir to an illustrious line of monarchs whose history is one with that of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia itself, King Abdullah was one of its most

remarkable figures. We can look back admiringly on the road travelled under his enlightened leadership by Saudi Arabia, a country ranked among the world's 20 largest economies. King Abdullah was a reformer who was able to undertake his kingdom's adaptation to the demands of our times, directing its evolution with the determination and moderation that everyone saw in him. He helped to give new impetus to the country's economic and political modernization, making Saudi Arabia a respected State and a model of stability in a conflict-torn region, taking a leading role through its exercise of a moderating influence that was essential, indeed indispensable, not merely in the Arab-Persian Gulf region and the Middle East but on the global chess board as well.

King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, the Custodian of Islam's holy places, was a universally respected personality, a repository of the kind of knowledge that derives from the great universal values that unite all religions, beliefs and cultures and that enable all men to see themselves as part of humankind. His historic visit to the Vatican, a demonstration of his faith in interreligious dialogue, remains etched in our memory.

King Abdullah was also an apostle of peace. No one can be unaware of the moderating influence he deployed to help ease tensions and foster dialogue in a region deeply scarred by every kind of conflict. One of his most noble ambitions was to work for peace in the Middle East so as to move beyond the sectarian clashes, divisions and tragedies of the twentieth century. Who can have forgotten the admirable courage he showed in presenting his call for world peace together with Israel, an initiative that will forever be associated with his name? (see A/63/PV.46) The peoples of the world will be eternally grateful to him for firmly making it clear that only a negotiated political settlement that includes all stakeholders and has the support and assurances of the international community can lead to a lasting solution in the Middle East.

There can be no question of King Abdullah's contribution to increasing his country's reach and making Saudi Arabia, the cradle of Islam, a beacon in the Gulf. He was also the standard bearer for a great ambition for which the international community will be forever grateful, that aspiration to build a better world that supports those things that unite humankind rather than those that divide them. Through that he rendered great service to the cause of peace and universal solidarity that is so dear to the heart of the United Nations — that is indeed its raison d'être.

His passing is therefore a loss not only for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic world but for our entire planet, which has lost in him a great leader whose nobility, bravery and generosity were universally valued, and a fervent believer in dialogue among civilizations, aware of all of our peoples' shared destiny and a powerful contributor to the cause of international peace and solidarity.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Austria, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States.

Mr. Riecken (Austria): I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States. We are deeply saddened by the passing of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, King and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We offer our sincere condolences to the Saudi royal family and the people of Saudi Arabia.

King Abdullah was a man of great vision and leadership who made a major contribution to the advancement of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He was a key architect of his country's economic and political progress. Among his many achievements he oversaw the transformation of the Kingdom's economy, presided over its first municipal elections and supported an expanded role for the consultative Shura Council that included the appointment of women. Under his guidance, the country achieved remarkable growth and prosperity for its people. He also placed a major emphasis on education, particularly as patron of the visionary King Abdullah scholarship programme. We in the Western European and Other States Group have been fortunate enough to host many of the recipients of the programme at education institutions in our countries.

King Abdullah was committed to a fair and lasting peace in the Middle East, including through the Arab Peace Initiative, as well as to countering violent extremism. His substantial contribution to the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre here in New York will form part of his legacy. We also pay tribute to his generous humanitarian and development support to those in need, and to his promotion of international interfaith dialogue.

Our thoughts are with His Majesty King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud as he takes the throne and builds on King Abdullah's many achievements. King Abdullah's leadership throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds and the international community will not be forgotten.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United States, who will speak on behalf of the host country.

Ms. Power (United States of America): On behalf of the United States as host country for the United Nations, I wish to offer our condolences to the people and the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the loss of King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud.

There is an Arabic proverb that says, "A tree begins with a seed". King Abdullah planted many seeds for Saudi Arabia's future, perhaps none so much as in the education of his people. Shortly after ascending to the throne in 2005, he created an ambitious scholarship programme to educate Saudi students abroad. Today more than 87,000 Saudi students are currently studying in the United States, with another 33,000 in other countries around the globe. Nearly half of the Saudi students currently participating in the programme in the United States are female. Those scholarship students have not only been ambassadors for Saudi Arabia around the world; on returning home they are ambassadors for the world in Saudi Arabia. The seeds planted in the students and their experience will grow in them and spread to their families and communities for the rest of their lives. On hearing of the King's passing, Mohammed Hakeem, a Saudi doctoral student in Canada, tweeted, "I am [a] scholar. I am the son of his dream....My heart is broken." King Abdullah also created both co-educational and all-female university and graduate degree programmes at schools in the Kingdom, and in 2011 granted women the right to vote and run in municipal elections.

During King Abdullah's time on the throne, the United States and Saudi Arabia worked together to confront many challenges. King Abdullah prioritized strengthening the United States-Saudi counter-terrorism relationship, including fighting violent extremist groups such as Al-Qaida and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, and combating foreign fighters. He was the author and proponent of the Arab Peace Initiative, a seminal document for building consensus on achieving a viable, just, two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the words of President Obama, it is "an endeavour that will outlive him as an enduring contribution to the search for peace in the region."

King Abdullah's efforts to promote and expand interfaith dialogue will constitute a lasting legacy that we must all deepen. His humanitarian contributions, including the $500 million donation to address the humanitarian catastrophes in Iraq and Syria, are helping keep people fed this very cruel winter. As Secretary Kerry said last week and we repeat today, the United States has lost a friend, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Middle East and the world have lost a revered leader.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Jordan, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

Mrs. Kawar (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Today we lament the passing of King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, a wise leader and king who devoted his life to the service of his nation and country. He defended the causes of the Arab and Islamic nations and humankind with true authenticity.

The death of King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud is a great loss, for this was a man whose achievement was deeply woven into the body of the Arab world. His values were noble and courageous, and we will remember his legacy and his support for united Arab action in strengthening its pillars and his defence of the Arab cause in the most difficult circumstances. His role was not limited to the Arab countries but went beyond them to encompass Islamic and world issues. Today we are remembering the very visible legacy he left, as will generations to come, so that his name and memory will live forever in the constructive role he played and the efforts he deployed for good causes wherever they might be.

Today, as we pay tribute to a leader of broad vision, we can touch on only some of his achievements, which are too numerous to list in full. Over the course of a decade he led his country forward, stimulating its development and making it a vital member of the world community. He valued education greatly as a way of measuring a country's progress, founding a number of institutes and universities. He worked to promote the Kingdom's educational system, and in that regard we cannot fail to mention the role he played in development all over the country and in various sectors, including health, society and the economy. We also remember

his efforts to improve women's opportunities in Saudi Arabia, believing firmly as he did in the importance of their role. He also worked to strengthen the role of young people in Saudi society and on every front.

King Abdullah spared no effort in defending the causes of Islam and emphasizing Islam's true, moderate character, realizing how essential it was to confront the lies promoted by the violent extremist groups that wish to destroy Islam's image. He was a major supporter of dialogue and moderation, rejecting violence, extremism and terrorism in any form. He worked to strengthen many initiatives aimed at promoting dialogue among civilizations and religions and establishing harmonious relations with others. His work on advancing the concept of coexistence and calling for peace, love and stability and for a settlement of crises through dialogue, while strengthening cooperation among the peoples of the world, was an example for others working on those initiatives to follow.

We are comforted today by the thought that the man following in the footsteps of the deceased is the new Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, and we also wish Crown Prince Muqrin Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and Prince Muhammad Bin Nayef Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud every success, good health and long life so that they can continue on the path begun by founding King Abdulaziz.

In conclusion, we hope the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will continue to see peace, stability and progress increase under the reign of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Kuwait, who will speak on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait): I am honoured to speak here today on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. I would first like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to His Excellency the President of the General Assembly for organizing this meeting to enable us to express our deep sorrow and convey our sincere condolences to the royal family and the Government and the people of Saudi Arabia for the loss to the Islamic umma of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, the late King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud.

The international community as a whole, and the Muslim world in particular, has lost an exceptional and admirable leader who never hesitated to lend a helping hand or provide assistance when needed to millions of people around the world stricken by natural disasters, epidemics or conflicts. In that way he underscored his deep belief in the importance of international cooperation and partnership between all nations, and of dialogue among all countries and peoples, regardless of their different cultures or beliefs.

As we convene here in the Hall of the General Assembly, we recall with great appreciation the King's fruitful efforts and outstanding achievements in various international fields, such as combating terrorism, providing humanitarian assistance, promoting peace and supporting interfaith and intercultural dialogue. In that context, there can be no doubt about the efforts of the late King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz to convene and ensure the success of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly held in November 2008 at its sixty-third session (see A/63/PV.46), as well as the Saudi initiative to establish the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, which truly reflects his firm belief in the importance of partnership and cooperation among all peoples and cultures, and of strengthening ways to improve rapprochement and fraternity between them.

The great contributions of the late King Abdullah in bringing prosperity and advancement to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and all the achievements and successes of his reign, did not distract him from lending a helping hand to millions of people all over the world. The Muslim world will always remember with pride his historic expansion of the two Holy Mosques and all the very apparent efforts that Saudi Arabia made to enable all Muslims to take advantage of the right of pilgrimage and umrah. His loss is indeed great, for this was a man who dedicated his life to achieving the well-being and glory of his people, and who worked honestly and tirelessly to defend the cause of Muslim nations, promoting an Islamic society in which love, cooperation, tolerance and fraternity prevail.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation, while mourning the loss of a great leader, who for as long as he lived carried in his big heart his concern for the Muslim world, can only pray to the Almighty to bestow his grace on his soul and have mercy on him, and to reward him for all his good deeds. We are certain that his successor, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, will continue ably and wisely to lead the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on its march along the road to growth, prosperity and

the welfare of its people, and will add to the Kingdom's pivotal role in fostering international cooperation, strengthening partnerships and ensuring international peace and security.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar, who will speak on behalf of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the pleasure of speaking on behalf of the States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council — the Kingdom of Bahrain, the State of Kuwait, the Sultanate of Oman, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and my own country, the State of Qatar. As Chair of this year's session of the Council, Qatar would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting enabling us to pay tribute to a great leader, to whom the entire world is grateful for his achievements in various areas of life, and particularly on behalf of causes of great importance to the international community. In that regard, on behalf of the Gulf Cooperation Council, I would like to thank the geographic Groups and the States Members of the United Nations for participating in this meeting and expressing their condolences.

The Arab and Muslim worlds, especially the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, have lost a great leader and an eminent personality of those worlds, the late Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, our brother country. Owing to our close relations as brother countries in the Gulf community, united in the Gulf Cooperation Council, and conscious of the late King's achievements, we feel deep sorrow at his passing. We cannot find the words to express what we feel. But our faith in God allows us to believe that the legacy of the late King can strengthen the rights of all. The world will never forget his achievements and will always remember him.

The Gulf community has lost a historic and eminent personality who contributed greatly to cooperation and to the promotion of the role of the Gulf Cooperation Council at the regional and international levels. The world has lost a wise man who believed firmly in the importance of international cooperation and the necessity of making every effort to achieve cooperation among peoples, whatever their religious or cultural background, so as to defuse crises and work for peace in the world. He played a major role in organizing the high-level meeting on interfaith dialogue held on 12 November 2008 here in New York during the General Assembly's sixty-third session (see A/63/PV.46). At that meeting, the late King proposed the creation of a world institute for peace and human dialogue, based at the United Nations, and today we see the results of that action in the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, which plays an important role in that regard. On the humanitarian front, the late King played a major role, received favourably by regional and international organizations. His support was not confined to one group or one category, but encompassed all who needed help around the world.

Well aware of the importance of peace and stability in the Middle East, the late King proposed the Arab Peace Initiative between our countries and Israel, adopted at a summit in Beirut in 2002. That Initiative is one of the principal reference points in the efforts to reach a just, lasting peace based on a two-State solution. Based on his broad vision, the late King also launched an initiative to combat terrorism around the world at the Counter-Terrorism International Conference, held in Riyadh in 2005. During the Conference he announced the creation of an initiative establishing a counter-terrorism centre, which has indeed been created within the United Nations and continues his work in supporting international efforts to combat terrorism.

King Abdullah was a wise man, a leader, a human being who worked tirelessly in the service of his nation and country. During his reign, he showed devotion to his country and his nation, creating a humane society. His achievements in terms of bringing about prosperity led the country to welcome millions of Muslims who came for the Hajj — the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. He worked to expand the space around the Two Holy Mosques, for which we are grateful.

In conclusion, when we recall the great achievements of the late King at the national, regional and international levels, we trust that the present Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, is the best successor to the most eminent predecessor. We are sure that he will continue the wise path of cooperation with the international community to respond to the challenges that arise and achieve a world where peace and stability and growth will prevail.

That is a comfort to us in our hour of loss. May God take the soul of the late King to Him. We pray for him.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Al-Mouallimi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): On 23 January, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia, departed our world. With his departure, the world has lost a life-long shining star and a remarkable, prominent leader. The departed was among the noblest of men, the most courageous and, indeed, the most generous. He was a statesman whose deeds touched the hearts of men and women throughout the world.

King Abdullah's heart was moved by the hungry and the needy. He was a pioneer in giving aid to the World Food Programme. He provided assistance to the victims of floods, natural disasters and epidemic diseases on all continents of our world.

King Abdullah's heart overflowed with feelings of love, peace, mutual understanding and the need for communication among all peoples of the Earth. He launched his initiative for dialogue among the faithful of various religions and all cultures from this very rostrum. He was always an advocate of the Charter of the United Nations and its principles. He always called for peace and harmony in our world.

In the past few days, Riyadh has received a large number of leaders of the States Members of the United Nations who went to share our grief and offer their kind condolences to the family of the departed. Today, the General Assembly has convened to bestow upon me its sincere feelings and sentiments. If the death of King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud is a loss for the world, for humankind and for the United Nations as a leader, the Saudi Arabian people and I personally have lost a kind, warm-hearted and friendly father whose last words, in bidding farewell to his people were, "Do not forget me in your good prayers."

We will not forget our good King. Here too are the witnesses of God's creation of the universe from all continents mentioning the King's good deeds and actions. May God give him the best reward for what he did for humankind.

Allow me to convey to the Assembly the greetings and appreciation of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, who has assumed the mantle of leadership and who will faithfully continue our procession forward. He extends the hand of Saudi Arabia to all nations of the world in love, friendship, peace and harmony.

I thank my dear brothers and colleagues. I thank the leaders and the peoples of their countries. We thank God who has blessed us with the life of our King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud. We thank God who has blessed us with this honourable remembrance following his departure. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust, we belong to God and to Him we shall return.

Tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Mårten Grunditz, late Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations

The Acting President: It also my sad duty to pay tribute to the memory of the late Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Mårten Grunditz, who passed away on Tuesday, 27 January. On behalf of the General Assembly, I would like to request the representative of Sweden to convey our condolences to the Government and the people of Sweden and to the bereaved family of Ambassador Mårten Grunditz.

I now invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to his memory.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The Acting President: I would like to deliver a statement on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, President of the General Assembly, on the passing of His Excellency Mr. Mårten Grunditz, Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations:

> "Today we pay tribute to Ambassador Grunditz, whose passing last week deeply saddened the United Nations community. I had the privilege of interacting and working with Ambassador Grunditz over the last several months. I know I speak for many of us when I say he will be greatly missed.
>
> "The Ambassador's work here at the United Nations spanned nearly five years and leaves behind an indelible legacy. Ambassador Grunditz had a genuine interest in many issues central to the Organization's work, including development, peacekeeping, humanitarian issues and human rights.
>
> "Ambassador Grunditz took a holistic view on international affairs. He had a strong interest in

broader peacebuilding issues and served as Chair of the Liberia configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. He also believed strongly in the importance of strengthening cooperation between regional organizations and the United Nations.

"The Ambassador worked tirelessly on issues related to the rights of vulnerable persons, including those with disabilities and children. Just this past November he helped organize a high-level meeting commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

"In conclusion, I wish to convey my sincere condolences to the bereaved family, the Government and the people of Sweden. May his soul rest in peace."

I now give the floor to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: I thank the General Assembly for taking time this morning to pay our respects to His Excellency Ambassador Mårten Grunditz of Sweden.

Ambassador Grunditz had a distinguished diplomatic career, with postings in Moscow, Beijing, Washington, D.C., and other capitals. The geographical breadth of his assignments was matched by the depth of his commitment to international cooperation and the United Nations.

During the four and a half years that he served as Sweden's Permanent Representative here in New York, he was an active presence across our agenda. I am especially grateful for his advocacy for the rights of persons with disabilities, his dedication to helping to consolidate peace in Liberia and his devotion to carrying on the legacy of former Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld.

He was known — and will be remembered — for his warmth, kindness, integrity and dignity. I thank the General Assembly for taking time this morning to remember a good colleague, and I offer my condolences to Ambassador Grunditz's his family, Ms. Åhs-Grunditz and their two children, and many friends, and to his colleagues in the Swedish Foreign Ministry and to all others touched by this loss.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Laassel (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I am to take the floor on behalf of the Group of African States.

The African Group would like to extend its sincere condolences to the family and friends of His Excellency Ambassador Mårten Grunditz, Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations in New York, as well as to the Swedish Government. We would like to pay special tribute to a man who was known for his kindness, devotion and generosity, which inspired us all.

Ambassador Grunditz was also known for his enthusiasm, his self-restraint and his sincere commitment to the African continent, in particular on issues of peacebuilding. Mr. Grunditz served as Chair of the Liberian configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and actively participated in the work of the Commission.

The African Group is confident that the Permanent Mission of Sweden will get through this difficult period and continue to pursue its work within the international community.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Viet Nam, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States.

Mrs. Nguyen Phuong Nga (Viet Nam): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States at this solemn gathering of the General Assembly to pay tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Mårten Grunditz, late Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations.

It was with the deepest sadness that we learned of the passing away of Ambassador Grunditz. On behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group, I would like to express our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family of Ambassador Grunditz and to the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations.

Ambassador Grunditz, a dear colleague to many of us, was an outstanding and skilled diplomat who served his country in an efficient manner during his long and successful career. He served with great distinction in various capacities. We are grateful for the wealth of experience that he brought to New York and shared with us as the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations.

During more than four years in New York, Ambassador Grunditz strove tirelessly to contribute to the work of the United Nations, including by serving as

an active member of a number of bodies and offices of the Organization. His contribution was wide-ranging, from development cooperation, to peace and security, to the reform of the United Nations, and it is still so vivid to all of us. He will be dearly missed by all of us.

On this occasion, on behalf of our Group, I would like to reiterate our commitment to continuing to work closely with the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Sweden in our joint efforts.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Ms. Bogyay (Hungary): On behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, I would also like to offer condolences to the family and friends of His Excellency Mr. Mårten Grunditz, as well as to the Swedish Mission to the United Nations, upon his passing on 27 January.

Ambassador Grunditz's career spanned more than 40 years. He served his country in a number of important assignments. Mårten was a very professional and knowledgeable colleague. His gentle and kind presence and professional legacy will be sorely missed and remembered by all of us.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Haiti, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Régis (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): The Group of Latin American and Caribbean States learned with shock and regret of the sudden death, on 27 January, of our esteemed colleague, His Excellency Mr. Mårten Grunditz, Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations in New York. This news had the effect of a cold shower on the entire diplomatic community, and each of us has been deeply affected this sudden loss.

Ambassador Grunditz, with his long and distinguished career, remains eminently linked to the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, where he had a very successful career for over 40 years, working on behalf of his country in various cities and capitals as diverse as Moscow, Beijing, Washington, D.C., Geneva, London and Athens, where he took on posts of increasing responsibility, before coming to New York in 2010 to lend his services as Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations.

A distinguished and seasoned diplomat who acted with ease and spoke fluently in the six languages of the Organization, Ambassador Grunditz leaves us a strong memory of a top official whose modesty was matched only by his rich erudition, his great culture and his deep knowledge of the United Nations system, of which he was, in his way, the embodiment and the expression.

Ambassador Grunditz was part of all the initiatives and the battles undertaken in the Organization to ensure the triumph of law and justice, specifically for women and children tragically affected by conflict situations, wherever in the world they occur. In that regard, Ambassador Grunditz was a great humanist, following in the footsteps of other great intellectuals and statesmen of his country who greatly influenced our world to be more equal and just. He follows in the footsteps of the second Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld, who passed away in 1961 while serving our great Organization, and Mr. Olaf Palme, the former Swedish Prime Minister, committed pacifist and dignified statesman, who died tragically in Stockholm in 1990.

The Group of Latin American and Caribbean States expresses its greatest sympathy to all of those who are grieving, and particularly to the spouse of Mårten Grunditz, Maine, to his children, Jenny and Henrik, to his family, to his friends and to the staff of the Permanent Mission of Sweden in New York. The Group of Latin American and Caribbean States asks the Mission to transmit its sorrowful condolences to the Government and the people of Sweden on the death of this great and distinguished statesman, whose memory will remain alive among us here in the United Nations.

May all of those here in New York and in Stockholm who are greatly affected by this sudden departure find in my words an expression of the heartfelt grief and fraternal solidarity that we share with them at this difficult hour.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Austria, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States.

Mr. Riecken (Austria): I have the honour today to speak on behalf of the States members of the Group of Western European and Other States.

We are deeply saddened by the passing of our dear colleague and friend, His Excellency Mr. Mårten Grunditz, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations here in New York. We offer our heartfelt condolences and sympathy to his family and to the staff of the Permanent Mission

of Sweden. We join them in mourning his untimely passing.

We have all lost not only a deeply respected and excellent colleague but also a friend who greatly inspired those who were fortunate enough to know him and work with him. Ambassador Grunditz was an outstanding and highly professional diplomat who impressed us deeply with his sharp mind, elegance, wisdom and thoughtfulness.

But he was not just brilliant and talented. He worked vigorously and with personal conviction to really advance the work of the United Nations. He was a remarkable negotiator and an intelligent debater. Any discussion Ambassador Grunditz participated in was to sure to benefit from his wise contributions and the constructive role he would consistently play.

As a remarkable representative of his country, Ambassador Grunditz had a significant and lasting impact on our joint efforts to promote development, gender equality and human rights and to prevent and resolve conflicts. It is safe to say that he was widely admired for his commitment to achieving our common global goals.

Our thoughts are with Ambassador Grunditz's family as we pay tribute to an inspiring person and his outstanding work. He will be remembered as a truly remarkable diplomat and valued friend. We will truly miss him.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, who will speak on behalf of the host country.

Ms. Power (United States of America): Mårten Grunditz's career as a diplomat spanned more than four decades. He was first posted as an attaché to the Swedish mission in Moscow in 1973, when it was still part of the Soviet Union. He went on to serve in Beijing, Washington, D.C., London, Geneva, Athens, and, of course, here in New York. He was a dexterous and deep diplomat.

Here at the United Nations, Ambassador Grunditz led the joint Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and the United Nations Office for Project Services, where he pressed for far-reaching reforms, such as the public disclosure of internal audits. He also chaired the Liberia configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, sounding the alarm bell early and ardently for the international community to respond to the spreading Ebola outbreak. He was also determined to ensure that Liberia and its neighbours were built back better — so that what has befallen the people of that region never happened again.

Among the first impressions many of us had upon meeting Mårten was his sheer physical presence. He towered above virtually all of us. But the Ambassador's personality and the way he treated people had the opposite effect: it made him accessible, it brought him close. And that was not only the case for fellow ambassadors, but for everyone he interacted with, from the most junior intern to the most senior adviser, as well as to people of all walks and ranks at United Nations agencies and other missions.

A ranking diplomat on his staff who worked with Ambassador Grunditz for years observed that when he chaired meetings during his time at the head of the joint Executive Board he always made a point of thanking every secretary and member of the support staff who had helped organize the event. As this diplomat described it, Mårten Grunditz had, "an ability to recognize people".

Ambassador Grunditz also knew how to listen. In diplomatic settings, which can too often feel automated, he would actually stop and pay attention to people's opinions and arguments. He would engage people, ask questions, probe. He treated everybody as if he had something to learn from them.

Those qualities not only made the Ambassador an exceptional human being, but also, of course, an exceptional diplomat. Knowing how to recognize people and how to listen to them defined the way he interacted with individuals at his postings around the world, with people in the General Assembly Hall, at the negotiating table and in leadership positions at the United Nations.

And those qualities also defined what the Ambassador believed in. A person who sees people as they are and knows how to hear them is a natural humanitarian and a natural defender of human rights — as Ambassador Grunditz certainly was, believing to his core that no individual should be treated differently because she is a woman, because of whom he or she loves, because of how he or she prays or because of where she is born.

It is also those qualities that made Mårten such a wonderful mentor to his staff. The respect with

which he treated people at the Swedish Mission and in previous postings bred a deep loyalty and dedication in those who served under him. It is why, when the Swedish Mission put out a sign-up sheet for staffers to stand by his condolence book and receive visitors, the sheet filled up immediately, and multiple staffers showed up for each shift. It was their way of performing a final service to a man who had taught them so much and to stand in his honour.

I witnessed that dedication the day Mårten passed away. After a meeting hosted by Swedish Foreign Minister Wallström, a young Swedish diplomat walked me to the elevator. Her eyes filled up with tears and she said, "We cannot believe it. He was such a good man." How right she was. And how shaped she will be, always, by the time that she got to watch him in action and learn from him.

Ambassador Mårten Grunditz gave nearly his entire professional career to the Swedish Foreign Service. It gave him back not only a chance to defend his values and serve his nation, but also led him to his life partner, Maine, whom he met decades ago in the diplomatic corps and who is here with us today, along with one of the Ambassador's two children, Jenny.

As all of us in this line of work know, diplomacy is not a solo occupation. Our families serve with us; they weather the excessive hours and the stresses, and they sustain us. As Ambassador Grunditz's career spanned decades, so did his family's service alongside him. For that, we are so grateful to Maine, Jenny and of course to her son, Henrik, as well, and we hope that the immeasurable loss they must feel is softened ever so slightly by seeing the tremendous contribution Mårten made to his country, to the United Nations, to the causes he believed in and to all of us, who learned so much from his towering example.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

Mr. Thöresson (Sweden): Let me begin by thanking the President, the Secretary-General, the representatives of all regional groups and, not least, of the host country, for their very heartfelt and warm words of condolence to Ambassador Grunditz's family and to his colleagues at the Swedish Mission, who were all with us here this morning.

I would like to start my words of remembrance by turning to Ambassador Grunditz's family, dear Maine, Jenny and Henrik, who I am sure will be watching this on the webcast. They have lost a loving husband, father and grandfather. Words cannot describe the pain and agony they are feeling. They meant the world to Mårten. Although he sometimes tended to be a bit private, whenever he spoke about them — his beloved wife, his children and his lovely grandchildren — his eyes always glimmered with joy and pride.

I can only hope that they feel the immense love and respect that we, all his current and former colleagues and friends at the Swedish Mission, felt for Mårten. He was not only a distinguished, experienced and extremely skilful diplomat and ambassador, always creative and constructive, seeking consensus while standing firm on principles; he was also by his very nature a truly inspiring leader, always attentive, always compassionate and always supportive to every member of his staff. He saw us, each and every one, inspired us and made us grow. We will remember Mårten's calm demeanour, his friendly, generous personality, his great sense of humour and his thoughtful and open-minded character. He will be deeply missed by all of us.

Mårten Grunditz had a most distinguished career in the Swedish Foreign Service, which he joined in 1973. His early career took him to important posts, such as Beijing, Washington, D.C., Geneva and London. In 1998 he was appointed Deputy Director-General for European Affairs, which also made him responsible for the first-ever Swedish presidency of the European Union (EU), in 2001. As would be expected, he did everything right. The presidency was a huge success and led to a virtual boom in the EU's popularity in Swedish society. In 2002 Mårten Grunditz was appointed Swedish Ambassador to Greece, a post he enjoyed so much that he stayed for almost seven years. In 2009, however, it was time for Sweden's second presidency of the European Union. The Government once again wanted to rely on Ambassador Grunditz's skill and experience, and appointed him Secretary-General for the organization of the Swedish presidency. Needless to say, the presidency was again deemed a great success.

In 2010 Ambassador Grunditz was appointed Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations. That turned out to be a perfect match. His passion and advocacy for a stronger United Nations role in conflict resolution, peacebuilding and conflict prevention are well known. He was eagerly looking forward to taking over the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission this year. He was a staunch defender of human rights and international

law. Ambassador Grunditz's 2012 chairmanship of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services clearly illustrated his strong commitment to advancing the global development agenda. Until the very end, he always pushed for an even stronger Swedish role in the United Nations, not least by working hard for a Swedish seat on the Security Council.

On behalf of Mårten's family, the Government of Sweden and all our colleagues at the Swedish Mission and in the residence, I would like to sincerely thank all those who have conveyed their warming and comforting words of condolence from all around the world, not least his many friends and colleagues present here in the General Assembly this morning.

I would like to end by quoting a short text by Reinhold Niebuhr that was cherished by both Mårten and Maine.

> "Nothing worth doing is completed in our lifetime; therefore we are saved by hope. Nothing true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we are saved by faith. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore we are saved by love."

Agenda item 136 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/69/722/Add.1, A/69/722/Add.2, A/69/722/Add.3 and A/69/722/Add.4)

The Acting President: Before we proceed, in keeping with established practice, I would like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to documents A/69/722/Add.1, A/69/722/Add.2, A/69/722/Add.3 and A/69/722/Add.4, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the Assembly that since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/69/722, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Rwanda and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have made the payments necessary to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes due note of the information contained in these documents?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 112 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(d) Election of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Note by the Secretary-General (A/69/721)

The Acting President: By its decision 59/420, of 27 May 2005, the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, elected Mr. António Manuel de Oliveira Guterres as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for a period of five years beginning on 15 June 2005 and ending on 14 June 2010.

By its decision 64/419, of 22 April 2010, the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, re-elected Mr. António Manuel de Oliveira Guterres as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for a period of five years beginning on 15 June 2010 and ending on 14 June 2015.

Members will recall that by paragraph 9 of resolution 58/153, of 22 December 2003, the General Assembly decided to remove the temporal limitation on the continuation of the Office of the High Commissioner set out in 57/186 and to continue the Office until the refugee problem is solved.

In his note contained in document A/69/721, the Secretary-General proposes to the General Assembly that the term of office of Mr. Guterres be further extended for a period beginning on 15 June 2015 and ending on 31 December 2015.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to re-elect Mr. António Manuel de Oliveira Guterres as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for a period beginning on 15 June 2015 and ending on 31 December 2015?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: On behalf of the Assembly, I would like to congratulate Mr. Guterres on his re-election as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Mr. Çevik (Turkey): Turkey welcomes and supports the Secretary-General's proposal to extend the term of office of Mr. António Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, until 31 December 2015. Since the number of people who have been displaced by force has now exceeded the numbers of those displaced

during the Second World War, we have been collectively compelled to take urgent action to address the needs of displaced persons. In that regard, under the able leadership of High Commissioner Guterres, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) fills a central role in delivering assistance and providing guidance on how to address the needs of asylum-seekers, refugees and internally displaced and stateless persons.

Unfortunately, thanks to the forced displacements resulting from the tragedies in Syria and Iraq that are unfolding right across our borders, Turkey has become the country hosting the second-largest number of displaced people in the world. In response to the ongoing crisis in the region, we have taken important steps to ensure assistance, protection and durable solutions for the displaced people to whom we have opened our doors. We commend the work of UNHCR, including its office in Turkey, in responding to the protection and assistance needs of refugees and other persons of concern in Turkey and beyond its borders. As we have stressed in multiple forums, including the United Nations, Turkey expects the international community to help to shoulder this noble responsibility through a genuine sharing of the burden in an equitable and meaningful way.

As we prepare and expand our deliberations for the World Humanitarian Summit scheduled to take place in Istanbul in 2016, Member States, donors and host countries alike, as well as non-governmental organizations and international entities, including UNHCR, have an important role to play in shaping the future of humanitarian assistance. We would like to wish High Commissioner Guterres success in his very challenging duties during his remaining time at the helm of UNHCR, and to reiterate our support for its work.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): On behalf of the Republic of Korea, I would like to welcome the General Assembly's decision to extend the term of office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. António Guterres, until 31 December 2015.

My delegation is pleased with the decision, since the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea in Geneva, in his capacity as Chair of the Executive Committee of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), was the first to draw the issue to the attention of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General so that Mr. Guterres's term could be extended for six and a half months. Given the seriousness of the current state of the emergency humanitarian response, and considering that UNHCR's programme management and financial reporting requirements revolve around the calendar year, we are confident that this extension of Mr. Guterres's term is crucial to the smooth running of UNHCR, and we wish him continued success in carrying out his important duties.

Mr. Moura (Portugal): We welcome the extension of the term of office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. António Guterres. The Secretary-General's proposal constitutes recognition of the merit of Mr. Guterres in dealing with an issue of extreme importance and one that Portugal considers vital. We believe that his substantial knowledge, capacity and experience will be crucial to ensuring the success of the actions taken in this challenging position. Portugal greatly appreciates and is grateful for the wide support of all Member States for Mr. Guterres's good work, evident in today's election by acclamation in the General Assembly, as well as in the previous endorsement of all regional groups of the extension of his mandate, as proposed by the Secretary-General. We thank them and wish Mr. Guterres well.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker on this item. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 112?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 113 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(f) Appointment of members of the Committee on Conferences

Note by the Secretary-General (A/69/107)

The Acting President: Members will recall that, at its 64th plenary meeting, on 5 December 2014, the Assembly took note of the appointments of the Central African Republic, Namibia, Paraguay and the Russian Federation as members of the Committee on Conferences for a period of three years, beginning on 1 January 2015.

Members will also recall that two seats from Asia-Pacific States and one seat from Western European and other States, for a period beginning on the date of

appointment and ending on 31 December 2017, remain vacant.

On the recommendation of the Chair of the Western European and other States, the President of the General Assembly has appointed France as a member of the Committee on Conferences for a term of office beginning on 2 February 2015 and ending on 31 December 2017.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of this appointment?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Regarding the two remaining vacant seats from the Asia-Pacific States, I urge the group to submit their candidatures as soon as possible.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (f) of agenda item 113.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.